



Opening Statement of Chairman Scott Franklin

Energy Subcommittee Hearing

A Review of the President's Fiscal Year 2027 Budget Request for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

April 28, 2026

Good morning, and welcome to our hearing on NOAA's Budget Proposal for Fiscal Year 2027.

I'd like to welcome NOAA Administrator Dr. Neil Jacobs as our witness this morning to discuss the President's proposed budget for the agency.

The President requested \$4.4 billion for NOAA's budget in FY27; this request represents a \$1.1 billion decrease from the discretionary and mandatory funding that NOAA was appropriated last year, aligning with this Administration's goals of reining in the excess spending of the previous administration.

As the budget request accurately describes, NOAA provides the environmental science, information, and services needed to protect the lives, property, and livelihoods of all Americans. Therefore, when making budget decisions, we should be guided by a simple question: Does this program, project, or activity advance that mission?

This year's budget includes several initiatives that I support. Expanded procurement of commercially available data is a steadfast position of this Committee for many years. This is reflected in the bipartisan Weather Act Reauthorization Act of 2025. The Committee also believes NOAA provides the federal backbone of our forecasting tools, and by increasing our commercial data-buy efforts, we can rapidly expand the pool of available data to improve the accuracy and timeliness of forecasts.

I'm pleased to see modest increases to the National Weather Service and Office of Marine and Aviation Operations. This budget proposal and restructuring efforts at NWS reflect the goal of both the Administration and Congress to create a more nimble and flexible workforce. The transition of the Advanced Weather Interactive Processing System, or AWIPS, to the cloud will enable forecasters to live and work all across the country while still maintaining 24/7 coverage. These two offices are at the forefront of innovation and forecasting that can save lives.

Florida's 18th District knows this firsthand; it is home to the Aircraft Operations Center. Aircraft based there, such as the Hurricane Hunters, are on the frontlines of tracking and monitoring severe storms like hurricanes. I've had the pleasure of taking a ride on a P-3, and while it is a distinguished aircraft, we must continue modernizing the fleet.

Congress has laid its marker down, and I look forward to hearing about the progress of our new C-130 and G550 aircraft from Administrator Jacobs.

I am also encouraged to see NOAA's budget reflect the President's order to establish maritime dominance. The budget requests an increase of \$60 million to accelerate the acquisition of Class C vessels and a \$75 million increase to advance a fleet of autonomous research vessels. We have held multiple hearings on data gaps in the ocean, including one just weeks ago on deep-sea mining. We know there are substantial areas of the ocean where data is lacking, and these activities will significantly improve our understanding of ocean conditions to support surface maritime commerce, forecasting, and mining activities.

These two programs are strong examples of how NOAA can supplement and even improve its data inventory by partnering with industry to ensure high-quality data that is cheaper to obtain through the private sector than for NOAA to attempt collection on its own. If we're looking to save taxpayer money, it seems logical to bolster these programs rather than have NOAA try to collect data on its own through expensive buildouts and federally owned instruments.

Nonetheless, I remain optimistic about NOAA's future. Congress consistently reinforces NOAA's core mission -- protecting lives and property -- and I appreciate Administrator Jacobs' engagement on this proposal. I'm confident we will continue working together to advance NOAA's mission.